DSBs are investigated by the Oil Marketing Companies and appropriate action is taken as per the guidelines laid down by the Government.

Outstanding dues of oil companies

1625. SHRI RAJEEV SHUKLA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that outstanding dues of oil compames from oil pool account are soaring;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) what steps are being taken to clear the dues; and

(d) what steps are being taken to cut down the operational cost of oil companies in view of global recession?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI SANTOSH GANGWAR): (a) and (b) The estimated oil pool deficit as on 31-3-2000 and 31-3-2001 was around Rs. 6,256 crore and Rs. 12,600 crore respectively.

(c) The management of the oil pool account is a continuous process and the strategy to manage the same depends *inter alia* on various factors *viz.* the prevalent international prices of crude oil/ petroleum products, exchange rate, duty structure, domestic selling prices of controlled products (motor spirit, high speed diesel, kerosene for public distribution and domestic LPG) etc. The oil pool deficit is monitored by the Government and appropriate action is taken from time to time.

(d) Various steps taken by oil compames to reduce operational cost include rationalization of manpower, upgradation of technology, energy conservation, reduction in input cost, improvement in productivity etc.

Reduction of subsidy on Petroleum Products

1626. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the volume of subsidy for the current financial year on kerosene oil, public distribution system and domestic LPG going by the current trends;

(b) whether Government are contemplating the reduction of subsidy on these items; and